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SUBJECT: IWC 2009 MEETING: DENMARK/GREENLAND VIEWS

REF: STATE 57020

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Denmark's IWC commissioner told us Denmark will again request an aboriginal whaling quota for Greenland, despite uncertainty regarding the whaling policies of the new Greenlandic Home Rule Government. Denmark supports continuation of the "Future of the IWC" small working group, without observers present, but urges better readouts of small group meetings. End Summary.

¶2. (U) ESTH Specialist spoke June 8 with Danish Commissioner to IWC, Ole Samsing, who will attend the upcoming annual IWC meeting in Madeira.

Danish Views Mixed on SWG

¶3. (SBU) Samsing said Denmark supports continuation of the "Future of the IWC" but believes progress over the past year has slowed because the "Small" Working Group is still too large to make progress on difficult issues. On the other hand, Samsing expressed surprise that the results of meetings held between even smaller groupings, including the U.S., Australia, New Zealand, Sweden, and Japan had not been shared with other IWC members like Denmark.

¶4. (SBU) Samsing said Denmark believes that it is absolutely essential to keep observers away from the SWG meetings. Denmark does support inviting members and observers to inter-session meetings. Samsing praised the "neutrality" and "effectiveness" of SWG chair De Soto, and Denmark believes that view to be widely shared among SWG participants.

Chairmanship Issue

¶5. (SBU) Denmark also supports IWC Chairman Hogarth's candidacy for another term. Regarding the vice-chairmanship, Denmark has no firm position. Samsing did not rule out the possibility of voting for the Japanese candidate, but he believes any Japanese candidate would face opposition from anti-whaling nations.

What about Greenland?

¶6. (SBU) After Denmark's request for an aboriginal harvest quota for humpback whales was denied at the last annual IWC meeting, a Greenland Home Rule Government minister had urged the Danish government to permit Greenland to withdraw from the IWC. Greenland is a self-governing territory but nevertheless still part of the Kingdom of Denmark. Denmark formally represents Greenland in the IWC, but typically provides a Home Rule representative a seat at the negotiating table. Greenland thus cannot leave the IWC on its own.

¶7. (SBU) Still, Samsing told us that it would be technically possible for Denmark to notify the IWC that the "territorial

applications" of the IWC are limited to the Faeroe Islands and Denmark, allowing Denmark to thus technically exclude Greenland from the IWC. However, Samsing implied that Denmark clearly prefers the status quo on Greenland's IWC status. He said Denmark would again request a new aboriginal quota of ten humpback whales for Greenland.

Samsing said he had warned Hogarth that "time is running out" on Greenlandic patience with the IWC and real progress on aboriginal whaling quota increases must be made if Denmark is to keep the Greenlanders engaged within the IWC.

¶8. (SBU) Samsing, noting that Greenland was forming a new government following June 2 parliamentary elections, said it is too soon to know what the new Home Rule Government's whaling policy will be. Samsing expects Greenland's new government to send representatives to Madeira, but he would not speculate further, saying only "then we will see what happens." Samsing noted parallel themes reflected in Greenlandic politics: resentment of what is seen as "cultural imperialism" and interference in Inuit affairs by the IWC and other international institutions (Greenlanders are still seething over the European Parliament's recent ban on Canadian seal skin imports), balanced by the recognition that it is in Greenland's interest to cooperate with and participate in international institutions.

Comment

¶9. (SBU) Greenland's new government takes the reins June 12 and its position on whaling issues will likely not be clear before the meeting in Madeira. Greenland's new Premier, for his part, has signaled his desire to ensure that Greenland engages with a globalized world. But Greenland's government, while new, faces the

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difficult and long-standing challenge of reconciling conflicting influences in its whaling policy: protection of Greenlandic cultural identity, promotion of Greenland's economic development, and engagement with the broader international community. We expect to see these tensions continue to manifest themselves in Greenland's, and Denmark's, dealings with the IWC.
MCCULLEY